

The words अनुगंगाप्रयागं are explained here by the scholiast to describe the situation of the king's metropolis *Padmávati*, as being situated in the Ganges above *Prayága*, or, as he words it, between *Allahabad* and *Haridvár*. But this explanation is quite inapplicable to the same words as they stand in the Vishnu-Purána, where they immediately follow the mention of *Mathurá*, and where the mention of *Magadha* following induces me to interpret the words "on the Ganges below *Prayága*" or between *Allahabad* and the sea.

II.—*Alphabets of the Tai language.* By the Rev. N. BROWN, Missionary in Assam.

[We are indebted to Capt. F. JENKINS, Political Agent in Assam, for kindly engaging Mr. BROWN to throw light upon the *Ahom* and *Khamtí* alphabets, of which it may be remembered Capt. JENKINS two years ago presented to the Society some manuscript volumes then undecipherable for the want of this indispensable key. The *Ahom* letters are stated to be copied from an old book in the author's possession. The brief notice of the language itself, (Mr. BROWN writes to Capt. J.) was gathered from a pandit of the *Jorhát* Rája, whom he employed as teacher for a few months. He did not seem to possess a very perfect knowledge of the *Ahom* language, and he stated that the same was true of the *Ahoms* in general, who for the most part have lost all knowledge of their original tongue.

Captain JENKINS thinks there can be little doubt that the *Ahom* rajas came into Assam from the eastward about the beginning of the thirteenth century; and that the immediate cause of their emigration is to be sought for in the breaking up of the Chinese empire by the Moguls,—for at the epoch when CHUKAPHA had fixed himself in Assam, KUBLAI KHAN had just established himself in China. We may confidently hope that after a little longer residence at *Sadiyá*, Mr. BROWN, who is rapidly extending his acquaintance with the different branches of the *Shyán* language will be induced to favor us with a sketch of the contents of the old *Ahom* chronicles, which, we are given to understand, certainly exist in Assam, and of which the volume transmitted by Capt. JENKINS may be a portion.

Capt. JENKINS alludes to a curious fact, communicated by Mr. BROWN, which should be a further inducement to examine their books; namely, that no trace of Buddhism is to be found in the religion of the *Ahoms*. This is a remarkable deviation from the circumstances

of the other *Shyán* families whose literature is but a direct translation of Burmese Buddhism, as their alphabets, the *Shyán*, *Khamtí*, *Láos*, &c., are seen to be mere modifications of the Burmese or *Páli* alphabet.

This fact would seem to argue that the emigration of the *Ahoms* from their own country *Siam*, had taken place prior to the introduction of the Buddhist religion into that country—but how can this be reconciled with the date of *CHUKAPHA*?—ED.]

*The Language of the Ahoms.*

The *Ahom* is a branch of the *Tai* language, which is spoken, with some variations, by the *Khamtis*, the *Shyáns*, the *Láos*, and the *Siamese*, all of whom designate themselves by the general appellation of *Tai*. Among the *Ahoms*, or that portion of the *Tai* race inhabiting *Assám*, the language is nearly extinct, being cultivated only by the priests, as the ancient language of their religion; while their vernacular and common dialect, as well as that of the people, is *Assámese*. As the *Ahoms* once ruled over *Assám*, it is somewhat surprising that more traces of their language are not to be found in the present dialect of the *Assámese*, which contains very few words of *Tai* origin.

As might naturally be expected, the *Ahoms*, from disuse of their original tongue, have lost many of its peculiar sounds. In conformity with the pronunciation of the *Assámese*, they give to *w* the sound of *b*; and *y*, they pronounce as *j* or *z*. The sound of the French *u*, which is so common in the *Tai*, they change sometimes to *ú* and sometimes to *í*. The *intonations* of their original tongue they have entirely lost; one reason of this undoubtedly is, that these *intonations* were never expressed by the *Ahoms* in writing. The same is at present the case with the *Khamtis* and *Shyáns*, who have no characters expressive of their *intonations*, having, like the *Ahoms*, adopted the *Burman* alphabet, which is inadequate to meet the wants of the *Tai* language in this respect. The *Siamese* characters, on the contrary, represent the tones with the greatest precision.

It is, however, remarkable that the language of the *Ahoms* as pronounced by the priests, corresponds to the *Siamese* with much greater exactness in some respects, than any of the *Shyán* dialects spoken between *Assám* and *Siam*.

1. The sound of *b*, frequent in the *Siamese* and *Láos*, is converted into *m* by all the *Shyáns*, while the *Ahoms* have preserved the regular *b*.

2. The *Siamese* *d* is changed by the *Shyáns* to *l*, and by the *Khamtis* to *n*, but the *Ahoms* give it its correct pronunciation.

3. The same is true of the letter *r*, which the *Shyáns* change to *h*.



# Alphabets of the TAI Language

Consonants

Vowels

Consonants						Vowels					
Burman	Ahom	Khamti	Shyan	Laos	Roman	Burman	Ahom	Khamti	Shyan	Laos	Roman
က	ᩃ	ᩈ	ᩉ	ᩊ	k g	က	ᩃ	ᩈ	ᩉ	ᩊ	ka
ခ	ᩆ	ᩇ	ᩈ	ᩋ	kh gh	ကျ	ᩆ	ᩇ	ᩈ	ကျ	ká
င	ᩉ	ᩊ	ᩋ	ᩌ	ng	ကိ	ᩉ	ᩊ	ᩋ	ကိ	ki
စ	ᩌ	ᩍ	ᩎ	ᩏ	ch j	ကီ	ᩌ	ᩍ	ᩎ	ကီ	kí
ဆ				ᩑ	chh jh	ကျ	ᩌ	ᩍ	ᩎ	ကျ	ku
ည	ᩎ	ᩏ	ᩐ	ᩑ	ny	ကျ	ᩎ	ᩏ	ᩐ	ကျ	kú
တ	ᩑ	ᩒ	ᩓ	ᩔ	t d	ကေ	ᩑ	ᩒ	ᩓ	ကေ	kè (they)
ထ	ᩒ	ᩓ	ᩔ	ᩕ	th dh	ကဲ	ᩒ	ᩓ	ᩔ	ကဲ	ke (men)
ဒ				ᩖ	á	ကော	ᩑ	ᩒ	ᩓ	ကော	ko (nor)
ဝ					dh	ကို	ᩑ	ᩒ	ᩓ	ကို	kô (note)
န	ᩕ	ᩖ	ᩗ	ᩘ	n					ကို	kü (french u three var- ieties)
ဗ	ᩖ	ᩗ	ᩘ	ᩙ	p b		ᩕ	ᩖ	ᩗ	ကို	
မ	ᩗ	ᩘ	ᩙ	ᩚ	ph bh					ကို	
မ	ᩘ	ᩙ	ᩚ	ᩛ	f		ᩕ	ᩖ	ᩗ	ကိ	kai
ယ	ᩙ	ᩚ	ᩛ	ᩜ	m					ကျ	kái
ရ	ᩚ	ᩛ	ᩜ	ᩝ	y		ᩕ	ᩖ	ᩗ	ကော	kau
လ	ᩛ	ᩜ	ᩝ	ᩞ	r		ᩕ	ᩖ	ᩗ	ကော	káu
ဝ		ᩞ	᩟	᩠	l		ᩕ	ᩖ	ᩗ	ကော	käu
ဇ	᩟	᩠	ᩡ	ᩢ	w		ᩕ	ᩖ	ᩗ	ကော	keu
ဇ	᩠	ᩡ	ᩢ	ᩣ	b					ကျ	kíu
သ	ᩡ	ᩢ	ᩣ	ᩤ	s		ᩕ	ᩖ	ᩗ	ကျ	koi
ဟ	ᩢ	ᩣ	ᩤ	ᩥ	h						
ဆ	ᩣ	ᩤ	ᩥ	ᩦ	a						

(Ahom Inscription of an Ahom Rupee.)

ကဝဟူၤ ခိဝ်း ခိဝ်း ခိဝ်း ခိဝ်း ခိဝ်း ခိဝ်း ခိဝ်း ခိဝ်း ခိဝ်း ခိဝ်း  
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4. Where double consonants, as *kl*, *pl*, *kr*, &c. occur at the commencement of a word, as they frequently do in Siamese, the Shyáns and Khamtis, as well as the Láos, soften the pronunciation by omitting the second consonant; but it is preserved by the Ahoms. I will illustrate each of these remarks by a few examples.

Siamese.	Láos.	Shyán.	Khamti.	Ahom.	
1. Bá	bá	má	má	bá	a shoulder.
Bán	bán	mán	mán	bán	a village.
Bin	bin	min	min	bin	to fly.
Bo	bo	mo	mo	bo	a well.
2. Dí	dí	lí	ní	dí	good.
Deng	deng	leng	neng	deng	red.
Doi	doi	loi	noi	doi	a mountain.
Dáu	dáu	láu	náu	dáu	a star.
Düan	dün	lün	nün	dün	the moon.
3. Rak	rak or hak	hak	hak	rak	to love.
Rái	rái	hái	hái	rái	bad.
Ron	ron	hon	hon	ron	hot.
Rú	rú	hú	hú	rú	to know.
Rüa	rü	hü	hü	rü	a boat.
Rüan	rün	hün	hün	rün	a house.
4. Plá	pá	pá	pá	plá	a fish.
Klai	kai	kai	kai	klai	distant.
Klüa	kü	kü	kü	klü	salt.
Plüak	pük	pük	pük	plúk	a husk.

From these circumstances we may conclude that the Siamese and Ahom dialects afford a more correct specimen of the original Tai language, than either the Láos, Khamtí, or Shyán; for it is improbable, if the original forms had been simple and easy of enunciation, that they would have been exchanged for others more difficult; but it is perfectly natural that difficult forms should be exchanged for others more simple.

#### *Explanation of the Table.*

It is probable that all the alphabets of the Tai, (if we except the Siamese,) were formed from the Burman. The column of Burman letters is merely added for the purpose of comparison. The Ahom, Khamtí, and Shyán alphabets each contain eighteen letters, but this number is quite inadequate to express the various sounds of these languages. The Láos alphabet is more perfect: it contains fewer letters, however, than the Siamese. In the above table we observe that the Láos alphabet contains, to some extent, two distinct characters for each letter of the Ahom and Shyán; one denoting the rising, and the other the falling tone\*. The rising-toned letters are set first

\* The second column of the Láos consonants embrace the second order or the softer sound of each class of the Indian alphabets, *g gh*; *jjh*; *d dh*; *b bh*, &c.: the *gh* only is formed differently from the same letter of the Burman alphabet. We have inserted these letters in the Roman column on the above